



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., orders flags to half-staff in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Lemuel B. Yazzie, 91

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., today ordered flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff from June 3 through June 6 in honor and recognition of the late Navajo Code Talker Lemuel Bahe Yazzie of Whitecone, Ariz., who died Friday.

He was 91. He was born on June 2, 1918, and would have turned 92 today.

“The late Reverend Lemuel B. Yazzie was a renowned Navajo Code Talker who served the United States of America, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Navajo Nation during World War II with courage, honor and distinction,” President Shirley said in a proclamation to be issued Thursday.

“The Rev. Yazzie endured the horrors of combat during the occupation of China and was in a radio platoon in a forward echelon against hostile forces. The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers and deepest condolences to his family during this time of grief.”

In 2002, he received the Congressional Silver Medal for his Marine service.

The Rev. Yazzie died peacefully at home in Whitecone, Ariz., said his daughter Linda Yonnie. He was proud to be a Code Talker and had long been active in the Navajo Code Talkers Association.



The late Navajo Code Talker the Rev. Lemuel B. Yazzie

The Rev. Yazzie attended elementary school at the Leupp Boarding School and finished high school at the Albuquerque Indian School in 1939.

During his high school years he was active in a variety of sports and captured the 1939 football championship of New Mexico with his fellow teammates.

He was known as an excellent boxer and won five state AAU championship titles in his weight class.

After high school he left for California where he got his professional boxing license and boxed throughout northern and southern California.

He fought 35 professional fights and won them all until his right hand was injured. He returned to Arizona and worked for the government repairing windmills.

In 1940, he married Dorothy Hardia Yazzie of Laguna Pueblo from the Village of Seama. They were married for 67 years until Mrs. Yazzie's death.

He was inducted in the U.S. Marine Corps on Sept. 21, 1944, and served in the 4th Marine Division and the 6th Marine Division as a radio telephone operator from July 22, 1945, until March 30, 1946. He was honorably discharged on April 28, 1946.

The Rev. Yazzie was employed with Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway as a diesel machinist for 20 years.

He resigned to attend the Indian Bible Academy in Cottonwood, Ariz.

Upon graduation from IBA in 1966, he moved his family to Flagstaff, Arizona where he worked at the Mount Elden Conference grounds.

In 1971, the Rev. and Mrs. Yazzie were commissioned by the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society of Wheaton, Illinois as missionaries to the Navajo people.

He was later ordained as the Reverend Lemuel B. Yazzie. From 1969 to 1971, he and Mrs. Yazzie lived in Chinle, Ariz.

In 1971, he moved his family to the Whitecone area where he established the *Tse' Bii' Otseel* Bible Church.

He was involved in community work as Whitecone Chapter president, helped organize Post 71, and worked many years as a rancher.

He served as a missionary until his retirement from CBHMS in 1987. He received an honorary doctorate degree from Indian Bible College in Flagstaff, Ariz.

The Rev. Yazzie was an active member of the Navajo Code Talker Association, participating in many of the Code Talker

events and traveling throughout the country. He participated in the New York City Veterans' Day Parade last November.

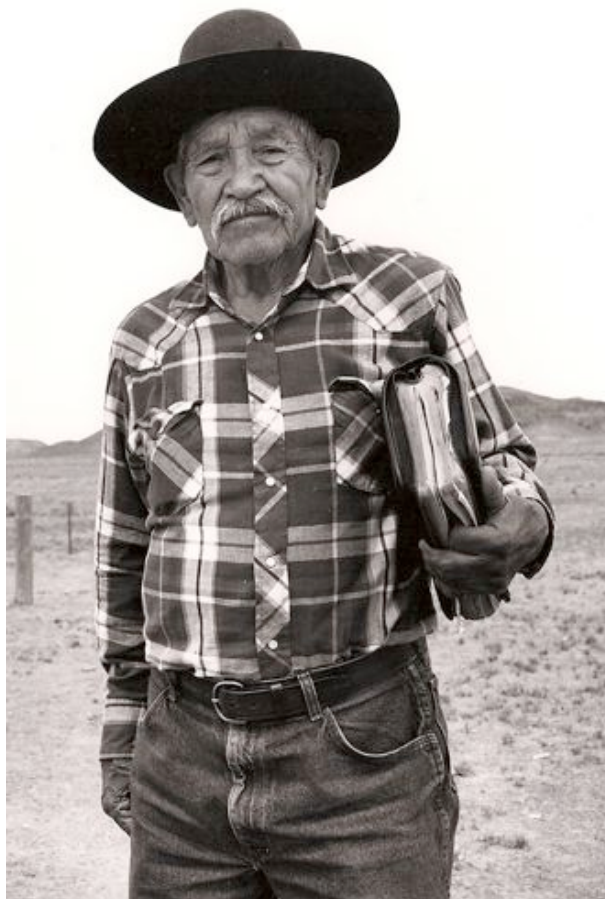
He was always a proud Christian, and served the Lord through his radio broadcasting, jail ministry, family counseling, church building, and Bible translation. He was involved in local bible camp meetings through out the Navajo Nation and other local tribes.

He traveled to Canada and Alaska to share the gospel with other tribal nations. He believed in the importance of indigenous people serving in and caring for our indigenous homelands, people, and culture. He embodied the essence of stewardship.

The Rev. Yazzie was *Tsinaajinnii*, born for *Keyonnie* Clan.

The Rev. Yazzie is survived by his

**Navajo Code Talker Lemuel B. Yazzie
holding his beloved old Bible.
Photo by Kenji Kawano**



brothers Dudley Yazzie, Raymond John, Kee John; sisters Nellie Nelson, Jeanette Nez and Elouise Jackson; his children Elmer Yazzie of Whitecone, Ariz., Geri Goombi of Casa Blanca, N.M., Ruth Burshia of Woodbridge, Va., Deborah Romero of Albuquerque, Walter Kisemh of Whitecone, and Grace Dyea of Casa Blanca, N.M.

He also leaves behind 26 grandchildren, 52 great-grandchildren, seven great-great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews and clan relatives.

The Rev. Yazzie's funeral service will be at 9 a.m., Saturday, June 5 at *Tse'Bii Osteel Bible Church* at Whitecone, Ariz. Burial will be at the Veteran's Memorial Cemetery, Fort Defiance, Ariz.

For more information, please call or e-mail Linda Yonnie at 928-699-4986 or jyonnie@uim.org or Claudia Jackson 928-380-3729 or jacksoncj5@gmail.com.